HERBALPEDIA

DONG QUAI

Angelica sinensis
[an-JEL-ee-kuh sye-NEN-sis]

Family: Umbelliferae

Names: Chinese angelica, dang gui, dong qui, tang kwei, honeywort; shan chin (mountain celery)

Description: A sturdy, erect perennial growing to 6 feet, with large, bright green leaves and hollow stems. The whole root is small and whitish and looks like carved ivory.

Cultivation: Native to China and Japan. The best rhizomes are in Gansu province in China. Seed is sown in spring, and the rhizomes are lifted in autumn.

 Constituents: coumarins, beta-sitosterol; 40% sucrose, 0.2-0.3% essential oil made up of carvacrol, safrol, isosafrol, alcohols, sesquiterpenes, cadinene, n-dodecanol, n-tetradecanol, n-butylphalad; also a non-blycosidal, non-alkaloid, and a water soluble crystalline material with B 12 and carotene.

Properties: tonic, blood tonic, antispasmodic, sedative, emmenagogue, analgesic, laxative

Energetics: sweet, acrid, bitter, warm

Meridians/Organs affected: heart, liver, spleen

Medicinal Uses: Often called “the female ginseng.” Though dong quai has no specific hormonal action, it exerts a regulating and normalizing influence on hormonal production through its positive action on the liver and endocrine system. It has a sweet and unusually thick pungent taste and is warming and moistening to the body. Chinese angelica is taken in Traditional Chinese Medicine as a tonic for “deficient blood” conditions, anemia and for the symptoms of anemia due to blood loss, pale complexion, palpitations, and lowered vitality. Chinese angelica regulates the menstrual cycle, relieves menstrual pains and cramps and is a tonic for women with heavy menstrual bleeding who risk becoming anemic. Since it also stimulates menstrual bleeding, other tonic herbs, such as nettle, are best taken during menstruation if the flow is heavy. It is also a uterine tonic and helps infertility. Chinese angelica is a “warming” herb, improving the circulation to the abdomen and to the hands and feet. It strengthens the digestion and it also is useful in the treatment of abscesses and boils. Research has shown that the whole plant, including the rhizome, strengthens liver function and the whole rhizome has an antibiotic effect. In China,
physicians inject their patients with Dong quai extract to treat sciatic pain. Clinical trials show that when this extract is injected into the acupuncture points used to treat sciatica, about 90% of people receiving treatment report significant improvement.

REMEDIES: For menstrual pain, take ½ tsp of the tincture with water up to 4 times a day. For poor circulation, infuse 1 tsp with 1 cup water and drink 1-2 cups a day. The chopped rhizome is commonly added to soups in China. Make a tonic wine with Chinese angelica and other tonic or bitter herbs. To improve vitality, drink a wine glassful daily. For anemia, take 1 cup of the decoction 2-3 times a day. Take the tablets as a general woman’s tonic.

Hormonal and Immune System Tonic: 2 parts dong quai root, 1 part lady’s mantle, 1 part saw palmetto berries, 2 parts Siberian ginseng root, 2 parts vitex berries, 1 part dandelion root, 1 part corn silk Take 25-50 drops of this tincture three times a day for 3-6 months.

TCM:
Indications: irregular, insufficient, profuse, painful and otherwise abnormal menstruation; premenstrual syndrome; headaches; pain from traumatic injury or surgical wounds; paralysis; poor appetite; cancer; empty blood
Contraindications: diarrhea
Incompatibles: fresh ginger, herbs of Acorus species, seaweed
Toxicity: Not recommended during menstruation or pregnancy.

Recipes:
Revival Balls
½ cup raw tahini
½ cup almond or cashew butter
½ cup honey or barley malt syrup
½ cup unsweetened carob chips
½ cup chopped, dried apricots
3 Tbsp bee pollen
2 Tbsp powdered dong quai root
2 Tbsp powdered panax ginseng root
2 Tbsp spirulina powder
2 vials royal jelly

¼ cup sesame seeds or shredded coconut

In a bowl, stir together everything but the sesame seeds and coconut. Mix well. Roll the mixture into little balls, about the size of small apricots. Gently dry-roast ¼ cup sesame seeds or shredded coconut in a heavy-bottomed pan over low-medium heat, stirring constantly, until golden brown (about 1-2 minutes). Roll the balls in the toasted coconut or sesame seeds. Store any leftovers in refrigerator, they will last for month. Enjoy one or two as needed before, during or after exercise. Drink plenty of water with them. (Healing Tonics)

Lamb with Dong Quai
1 lb lean lamb
12 to 5 Chinese mushrooms, soaked and drained
20 water chestnuts
2 Tbsp oil
2-3 Tbsp fermented soybean paste
Thumb size ginger, thinly sliced
½ tsp salt
½ oz dong quai
1 quart water
2 Tbsp rice wine

Clean lamb and cut into ¾ in cubes. Slice mushrooms thinly. Peel skin and cut water chestnuts into halves. Heat wok. Add oil. Fry soybean paste. Add lamb and ginger. Stir-fry a few times. Add salt, dong quai, mushrooms and water chestnuts. Stir. Remove to claypot or saucepan. Add water and simmer over low flame for 2 to 3 hours or until meat is tender. Bring to boil, add rice wine. Remove and serve. (The Family Herbal Cookbook)

Chicken with Dong Quai and Astragalus
½ a chicken or 2 chicken thighs
2 cups water
2 to 3 pieces of dong quai
2 to 3 slices astragalus
2 Tbsp sesame seed oil
Thumb-size ginger, crushed, finely sliced
1 Tbsp light soy sauce
½ tsp salt
1 Tbsp rice wine

Skin chicken and cut into average size pieces.
Put 2 cups water into a saucepan. Add in dong quai and astragalus. Simmer for 1 to 1 ½ hours or until liquid is halved. Put aside.

Fry ginger in sesame seed oil until fragrant and light brown. Fry chicken for about 10 minutes over low heat, stirring continuously so that it does not burn. Add soy sauce and salt. Raise heat again and pour the dong quai and astragalus brew over the chicken. Boil for another 5 minutes. Remove from heat and serve immediately with a tablespoon of rice wine added to the boiling dish. (The Family Herbal Cookbook)

Double Boiled Chicken with Dong Quai
12 ¼ oz chicken
½ oz dong quai
Thumb-size old ginger, crushed
Pinch of salt

Skin chicken, remove gristle, and cut into average size pieces. Dry with a kitchen towel.

Combine chicken, ginger and salt and put on top of an inverted heatproof bowl that fits over a bigger heatproof bowl. Put the dong quai at the edge of the upturned bowl. Double boil for 4 hours. Every half hour add a spoonful of water to the chicken meat to prevent the meat from sticking to the bowl or drying out. Drink this brew before going to bed. You should get from ¾ to 1 cup of brew at the end of the cooking time. (The Family Herbal Cookbook)

References:

Sources: 
Crimson Sage, http://www.crimson-sage.com
Plants

HERBALPEDIA™ is brought to you by The Herb Growing & Marketing Network, PO Box 245, Silver Spring, PA 17575-0245; 717-393-3295; FAX: 717-393-9261; email: herbworld@aol.com URL: http://www.herbalpedia.com Editor: Maureen Rogers. Copyright 2011. All rights reserved. Material herein is derived from journals, textbooks, etc. THGMN cannot be held responsible for the validity of the information contained in any reference noted herein, for the misuse of information or any adverse effects by use of any stated material presented.